

NOTES ON “DIALOGUE SUR LE TABOU ARMENIAN”¹

Pulat TACAR
R. Ambassador
tacarps@gmail.com

Abstract: *This article is a commentary on some views expressed in the book entitled “Dialogue sur le tabou arménien”, published in France. The book is an interview conducted with Prof. Dr. Ahmet Insel and Michel Marian.*

Keywords: *Armenian Genocide allegations, Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian*

Introduction

Professors Ahmet Insel,² at Galatasaray University in Istanbul and Michel Marian,³ at Paris School of Political Science (Sciences Po) have carried out an exchange of views, together with Ariane Bonzou,⁴ and this was published in 2009 as a book of 169 pages under the title of “DIALOGUE SUR LE TABOU ARMENIAN” (*A Dialogue over the Armenian Taboo*). This article is based on this book and provides insights to the content of the book while presenting established facts and truths of international law which at times were ignored in the dialogue of these two professors.

Before providing insights to the above mentioned book, it is important to highlight the meaning of the term *taboo*. According to the Chamber’s Twentieth Century Dictionary, “taboo” means “forbidden”; “it is a Polynesian (or other) system of prohibition connected with things considered holy or unclean.”

It is known through experience that Armenians are not willing to discuss or to engage in dialogue with those who do not subscribe to their one sided interpretation of the law of genocide as a whole. Armenians are not satisfied even if the US Presidents do not pronounce the word “genocide” in English and refers to the same concept by saying “*metz jegern*” in Armenian. Genocide became an Armenian taboo.

1 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), “Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien,” Liane Levi, 2009.

2 Ahmet Insel has been the Chair at the Economics Department, Galatasaray University since 2007, also works at the “İletişim” Publishing House.

3 Michel Marian is a professor at the Paris School of Political Science. He has published articles in the *Esprit* and *Nouvelles d’Arménie* on the Armenian question.

4 Ariane Bonzou is a journalist. She was the Istanbul correspondent of the ARTE television channel between 1996 and 2000.

Michel Marian's dialogue partner, Ahmet Insel shares his views in many ways, thus their "dialogue" was possible, and it is totally aimed to underline the validity of the Armenian taboo. In the following sections, it will be possible to see to what extent the arguments mentioned in the book are sound and objective as one would expect from established professors at two distinguished universities.

Families, Years of Childhood and Youth

The first 73 pages of the book are dedicated to Marian's and Insel's exchange of accounts of their family life, childhood and their youth. Marian's grandfather and family are immigrants from Bayezit and Erzurum in Turkey. Insel's family immigrated from Serez (Greece) to Turkey. Marian's grandfather had fled Bayezit (Eastern Turkey) in 1915 and his father Martin Haroyan was born in Armenia. Fate brought Martin to France and there he took the last name of Marian to hide his real identity. When Michel Marian's father Martin Haroyan was working as a journalist in Armenia, the Second World War broke out. The Russian troops surrendered to Germans in Crimea. Since Father Haroyan spoke German, he joined the German Army and became their interpreter, thus "*unlike other Armenians, he could escape the concentration camps.*" Having accompanied the German Army, he went to France and Italy. It is known that many Armenians joined the German Army during the Second World War. Finally, in compliance with the agreement between de Gaulle and Stalin, soldiers of Armenian origin serving in the German army, were handed over to Russia. If Marian hadn't changed his name and birthplace and gotten rid of his German uniform, he may not have survived the Stalin era. His son, Michel Marian, was born and grew up in France as a militant opponent of Turkey. Among the French Armenians, anything in favor of Turkey was offensive for being evil and unfair.⁵

Ahmet Insel says that in his youth, the histories of old tragedies (including the Armenian tragedy) were not really mentioned. Marian, on the other hand, recalls from his childhood the use of the words "jart" (slaughter) and "gart" (exile) defining the fate of Ottoman Armenian community.

In the 1970s, both Marian and Insel were in France and they belonged to the extreme leftist camp. Insel was a member of the French Communist Party⁶ Meanwhile, Marian participated in studies on "the Armenian genocide and the unfair treatment of the Armenians." He says that he was afraid of the Turks.⁷

5 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, p.53.

6 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, p.58.

7 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, p.62.

They disagree on the Term of "Genocide"

The views of Ahmet İnsel and Michel Marian demonstrate similarities from a variety of aspects. There is, however, one point they do not agree upon, that is the term "genocide".⁸ For that reason, I would like to first start with elaborating on this part of the dialogue. Some other aspects are further presented under separate sections below.

Bogus "Nürnberg Criteria" Made by Michel Marian

Michel Marian suggests focusing on the "Nürnberg Criteria"⁹ to qualify the tragic events of 1915 as genocide.

When Marian emphasizes the Nürnberg criteria, is he, in fact, referring to Nürnberg Laws¹⁰ issued by Nazi Germany? Probably not. Are his Nürnberg criteria included to the London Agreement of August 8th 1945? Or could he be highlighting Article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal?¹¹ Finally was it referring to the U.N. General Assembly Resolution 96 (1) dated December 11, 1946 on the Crime of Genocide?¹² These questions are unanswered. Most probably this is a new attempt to render the legal content of the *1948 Genocide Convention* dysfunctional by inventing alternative criteria and/or concepts.

Under the title of "Jurisdiction and General Principles", the Charter of the Nürnberg Military Tribunal includes categories of "crimes against peace", "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity." The crime of genocide is not included in this list.

Genocide is an international crime; its definition is clearly stipulated in legal terms by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on 9 December 1948. By creating his own Nürnberg criteria with regard to the crime of genocide, Michel Marian amends the definition laid down by the Convention.

8 Ahmet İnsel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, pp. 109-125.

9 Ahmet İnsel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009.

10 Sevin Elekdağ, "Ermeni Olaylarını Anlamak: Holokost ile Karşılatırmalı Analiz" (Understanding the Armenian Question: A Comparative Analysis with the Holocaust), *Ermeni Araştırmaları Dergisi* (Armenian Studies Journal), No: 32 (2009), p. 91 n. 17. "The Nürnberg Laws, which constituted a fake scientific ground for the racial discrimination against the Jews were made of two laws: Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor and the Reich Citizenship Law."

11 Ahmet İnsel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, p. 31.

12 "Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human group, as homicide is the denial of right to live of individual human beings, ...The Punishment of the crime of genocide is a matter of international concern.Genocide is a crime under international law, which the civilized world condemns and for the commission of which principals and accomplices, wheter private individuals, public officials or statesmen, and -whether the crime committed on religious, racial, political or any other grounds- are punishable.

Marian tries to explain his own Nürnberg criteria as follows: His first criterion supposedly suggests that the specific intent of genocide targets one community's ethnicity and religion. Let me say that his version remains incomplete when compared to the Genocide Convention. The Convention introduces a more comprehensive definition by having included "nationality" and "race" in the targeted groups. Political groups are excluded from the protected groups. The second criterion appears to be the nature of the act. Marian, however, does not provide details on this subject and claims that this point has not received attention. Marian argues that "forceful religious conversion" should be considered as an act of genocide. This has not been included either in the content of the Genocide Convention. Marian apparently ignores the fact that the International Preparatory Conference, which drafted the Convention, discussed the matter at the time, but refused to incorporate it into the content.

To be able to write and comment on Genocide law, one should definitely read the Proceedings of the 1948 Convention's International Preparatory Conference.

Michel Marian's third criterion seems to be concerned with the "government's involvement in the crime of genocide." This subject is also not covered by the Genocide Convention. Article IX of the Convention refers to the responsibility of a State (*and not of the Government*) in another context. This context is about the right of State parties to the Convention to address the International Court of Justice regarding the disputes (including the responsibility of the State) between them, on the interpretation, application or fulfillment of the Convention.

Finally, the fourth Marian/Nürnberg criterion rests on the "intent to destroy." At this point, Marian once again conveniently fails to mention the essence of the Genocide Convention which focuses on the words "as such".¹³ On this matter, the International Court of Justice lays down the strict conditions concerning the proofs needed for the establishment of the crime of genocide. Without the "special intent" none of the acts enumerated in Article II of the Genocide Convention will constitute genocide. Instead, those acts may be interpreted either as war crimes, or crimes against humanity, or grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, or unlawful criminal acts as defined by national legislations of the countries in question.

The fundamental principles of the Genocide Convention are summarized below.

One may argue at this point that "*all these are petty legal details and should not*

13 Article II. : In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such a) Killing members of the group: b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group:c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction in whole or in part: d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group:e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

matter much. What is important on the matter is the annihilation of the Ottoman Armenians." This aspect is probably the most important difference of opinion and appreciation between the majority of the Turks and Armenians. The great majority of the Turks do not deny the sufferings and the immense losses due to the tragic events of 1915; but they insist that -according to their evaluation- the "specific intent" to destroy the Ottoman Armenian community "as such" did not exist at that time. A substantial amount of document in the archives proves this. In addition, the Turks underline the great losses incurred by the Muslim Ottomans and the responsibility of Armenian revolutionary gangs on that. The Armenians, however, defend the contrary and request from the Turks and the international community to accept their selective reading of history and their genocide dogma; for them the losses of the Muslim citizens of the Ottoman State are negligible and cannot be compared with the Armenian losses; they vehemently refuse to enter in an objective exchange of documents and/or views by asserting that their undeniable historical truth can not be put to debate. Furthermore, those who insist on the recognition of the Armenian genocide, close their eyes to Armenian atrocities and to the Balkan type use of violence, which constituted a model in that the terrorist groups would attack the civilian Muslim population of the Ottoman State and provoke them to retaliate. If the Muslims retaliated or if the administration took military action, there would be loud cries of persecution and calls on Europe to intervene.¹⁴ The works of the Armenian authors who have written on Armenian Revolutionary Movements give a clear picture and need no further comments.¹⁵

Fundamental Principles of Genocide Law

For the determination of the crime of genocide and incriminating the perpetrators of such a crime, four fundamental principles of law should be taken into account.¹⁶ First is the principle of legality: There will be no crime without law –*nullum crimen sine lege*–, and no punishment without a law –*nulla poena sine lege*–

14 Gündüz AKTAN, "the Armenian Question. Basic Knowledge and Documentation" Ankara, 2009, Teraz.i yayınları pp. 282

15 Louise NALBANDIAN, "Armenian evolutionary Movement: the Development of Armenian Political Parties through the 19. century" Berkeley, University of California Press, 1963. pp 110-11

"...The Hinchag program stated that " Agitation and terror were needed to elevate the spirit of the people. The people were also to be incited against their enemies and were to profit from the retaliatory actions of these sane enemies. Terror was to be used as a method of protecting the people and winning their confidence in the Hinchag program.....the most opportune time to institute the general rebellion for carrying out immediate objectives was when turkey was engaged in a ware....."

K.S. PAPAŽIAN, "Patriotism Perverted" Boston, Bakar Press, 1934 pp.14-15 "...The purpose of the Dashnag federation is to achieve political and economic freedom in Turkish Armenia by means of rebellion.... terrorism has from the first, been adopted by the Dashnag Committee of the Caucasus as a policy or a method of achieving its ends... Method No.8 is as follows: To wage fights, and to subject to terrorism the Government officials, the traitors; Method No. 11 is to subject the government institutions to destruction and pillage.

16 Dr. Şükriü M: ELEKDAĞ "The crime of Genocide from the perspective of international criminal law" September 10,2006 . Unpublished notes handed over to participants during the meeting.

Second is the principle of individual responsibility. According to Article IV of the Genocide Convention, only individuals can commit this crime¹⁷ and be punished. Legal persons and the States cannot be incriminated by this crime. This principle appeared in the Nürnberg and Tokyo Tribunals Statutes. The Nürnberg International Military Tribunal's judgment held that "Crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can provision of international law be enforced." The International Criminal Court Statute of Rome, in its Article 25 provides only for individual criminal responsibility. Michel Marian carefully avoids to include this "real Nürnberg" principle in his "Bogus Nürnberg" criteria.

Third is the conduct of due process of law. According to Article VI of the Genocide Convention, the competent tribunal is the competent court of the State in the territory of which the act was committed or the international tribunal the jurisdiction of which has been accepted by the parties.¹⁸ Parliaments or other bodies, scholars, journalists etc. are not competent authorities or persons to decide on the existence of the crime of genocide. Michel Marian like all other Armenian scholars and their supporters never mention this basic *sine qua non* element of the genocide law. They prefer to ramble in troubled political waters instead of taking the right and legal path.

Fourth is that genocide is distinct from other international crimes, like war crimes or crimes against humanity, because it requires a special intent (*dolus specialis*) to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such. The importance of the words "as such" is also highlighted by the decision of the International Court of Justice in Bosnia / Serbia case: The International Court of Justice in its decision dated 28 February 2007 placed special emphasis on the question of intent. It underlined that genocide, as defined in the Convention requires both acts and intent:

"Article II (of the Convention) requires the establishment of the intent to destroy, in whole or in part the protected group, as such. It is not enough to establish that deliberate killings of members of the group have occurred. The additional intent must also be established and defined very precisely. It is often referred to as a special or specific intent or dolus specialis. It is not enough that the members of the group are targeted because they belong to that group that is because the perpetrator has a discriminatory intent. Something more is required. The acts

17 1948 Genocide Convention Article IV. "Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article III shall be punished whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals."

18 1948 Genocide Convention Article VI "Persons charged with genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article III shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction with respect to those Contracting Parties which shall have accepted its jurisdiction"

listed in Article II must be done with intent to destroy the group as such in whole or in part. The words "as such" emphasize that intent to destroy the protected group.

Great care must be taken in finding in the facts, a sufficiently clear manifestation of the intent¹⁹ "Ethnic cleansing", deportation... the expulsion of a group or part of a group does not in itself suffice for genocide. The Court has long recognized that the claims against a State involving charges of exceptional gravity must be proved by evidence that is fully conclusive.

There is a clear evidence indicating that the Ottoman Government of the time had no intention of exterminating the Armenians as a whole or as part. Members of the gangs that attacked the Armenian convoys and those officials who exploited the Armenian plight, neglected their duties or abused their powers were court-martialed."²⁰

In fact, 1673 persons (528 of them members of the armed forces or State security services, police or other public services) were court-martialed in 1916. 67 of them have been sentenced to death penalty, 592 persons have been sentenced to various prison charges during the tenure of the Union and Progress Government."

Insel Holds the Opinion that 1915 Events Should Not be Qualified as Genocide

For different reasons than those commonly known, Insel does not consider the incidents of 1915 as genocide, since he believes that the 1915 events fall into the category of "crime against humanity" and that the Ottoman Government bore full responsibility for them (p.114). But -as a friendly compromise towards his dialogue partner- he underlines that "*he is willing to reconsider his conclusion in the light of new information to come forward in twenty years, two years, six months or one day proving the genocide accusation.*"

One wonders whether Insel reached his conclusions upon a meticulous reading of the definitions of "crime against humanity", "war crime" and "crime of genocide" provided by the Roma Statute which founded the International Criminal Court;

19 The International Court of Justice in its decision of 26 February 2007 on the Bosnia/Serbia case underlined this emphasis with the following statement : "With respect to killing members of the protected group ..the Court finds that it is established by overwhelming evidence that massive killings throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina were perpetrated during the conflict. However the Court is not convinced that those killings were accompanied by the specific intent on the part of the perpetrators to destroy in whole or in part, the group of Bosnian Muslims. It acknowledges that the killings may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, but that it has no jurisdiction to determine whether this is so.

20 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien," Liane Levi, 2009, PP. 197-209.

because, Insel asserts “*that genocide has been mainly associated with the Shoah of the Jews and that the term stands for the specific and systematic destruction of every single member of a community including the children and elderly.*” However, the massacre of the Armenians, as Insel continues, seems to be in compliance with the Ottoman tradition of massacre committed against its own peoples. To support his argument, he stresses that “*Kuyucu Murat Paşa (Murad Pasha the Well-Digger) had decapitated Alevis and Druzes, and filled wells with their heads; deportation was not uncommon in the Ottoman State tradition and that the Republic of Turkey extended this tradition with the forced migration of Kurds in 1934 and 1950.*” Insel continues by criticizing some Turkish officials and intellectuals who argue that “*in 1915 the Ottoman Empire was in the state of war and Armenians were deported away from the borderlines for having conspired with the Russians against the Ottoman government.*” According to Insel, this argument is not valid, for even if the establishment of a security zone had been the main concern of the Ottoman State, the deportation of the Armenians of Izmir, Çanakkale or Bursa, which are located thousands of kilometers away from the Russian border, could not have been explained by security reasons.

To the argument regarding the similarity between the relocation of Ottoman Armenians and the internment of United States citizens of Japanese origin during the Second World War, he adds that the Japanese American internment camps of 1941 were not similar to the Turkish-Armenian deportation of 1915.

On the overall, Insel argues that “*the Ottoman government targeted Armenians and meanwhile put some of its other non-Muslim subjects into jeopardy as well. However, the Turkish conduct of deportation lacked Germany’s specific intent to destroy, it was not designed to destroy an entire race and some Armenian women and children were spared; therefore, it should not be appropriate to use the term genocide for the events of 1915.*”

Marian brings a new answer to the question, “*why the international community should recognize the Armenian genocide.*” He argues that:

“The deportation of the Armenians was not only a population transfer. It intended to destroy the Armenians. This act, according to the 1948 definition, is genocide. Then, what is the use of debating over words? A positive law of some sort to punish such a crime was non-existent in 1915. The Armenians paid the toll for the entire losses of the Ottomans accumulated up until that time. Since the Armenians are long dead, there is no possibility that their losses could now be compensated. The courts could not punish the responsible ones because they also are not alive. And there is no court which could try the criminals. For that reasons, the world should recognize the incidents of 1915 as genocide. Only this act would prove apt to the

historical development of the sense of law and justice. Given that genocide is an undeniable historical fact, why are we deprived of the credit of this fact? The denial of the genocide is a problem of civility for Turkey and the international community. The differences of opinion over this question should not hinder other developments and the doors to dialogue should not be closed on the grounds that the genocide has not been recognized. One can discuss the differences between the Shoah and the 1915 incidents, but under one condition: the incidents of 1915 should not be evaluated as the massacres of Srebrenica. The resemblance is rather than with the Shoah. One of the differences between the Shoah and the Armenian genocide is the Islamization of the women and children.²¹ This Islamization, nevertheless, should not reduce the genocide elements of the incident, since those women and children were not given a choice – others had been either slaughtered or abandoned in the desert. Today some families, especially Kurdish ones, think it is chic to have a grandmother of Armenian descent. The situation is different for us, the Armenians. Until today, we have been known without religious identity.”²²

Srebrenica Was Not Genocide !

According to Professor Insel, what happened in Srebrenica is not genocide: “*If Srebrenica was to be called genocide, then the Armenian deportation should also be considered as such.*”²³ Never doubting that the incidents of 1915 are genocide, Marian shares Insel’s conclusion on Srebrenica. One is rather amazed – not to use stronger words - that both Professors Marian and Insel seem to ignore the wordings of the 1948 Genocide Convention, the Rome Statute and the Decisions of the International Court of Justice as well as the International Penal Tribunal on Yugoslavia.

Overall Lack of Knowledge on Genocide Law

On this occasion, it should be underlined that a Professor of Political Science – no matter how militant he may be - should comply with his academic responsibilities, and in such a dialogue seeking reconciliation, should avoid any misleading comments that could put his credibility in question.

The remarks of both Marian and Insel demonstrate a “lack of knowledge” on

21 Please see Sevin Elekdağ, ‘Ermeni Olaylarını Anlamak’ (Understanding the Armenian Question), pp. 87-107.

22 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), “Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian,” Liane Levi, 2009, pp. 117-119.

23 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), “Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian,” Liane Levi, 2009, p.113.

genocide law. Another explanation to these two professors' selective readings on the matter could be their willingness to take the discussions outside the legal framework of the 1948 Genocide Convention and the International Court of Justice.

Despite the final verdict by the former Yugoslavia's Criminal Court ruling that the acts of two Serbian officials were crimes of genocide, both Insel and Marian claim the contrary.²⁴ Thus, they posit themselves in the place of self made judges and pretend that a valid decision of the competent international tribunal does not exist.

For God's sake, if these two professors express these views openly in Switzerland, they may well be sentenced for defying the crime of genocide; a delinquency foreseen by Article 22 *bis* of the Swiss Penal Law. Or.. "denial" seems to be an indisputable right exclusive to them.

Difference Between "Genocide" and "Crime Against Humanity" According to Michel Marian

With reference to Insel's remarks arguing that the 1915 incidents should be seen as crime against humanity, Marian says: "*There is an important difference between 'crime against humanity' and 'genocide'. Genocide is the specific intent to erase people completely from the surface of the earth, whereas crime against humanity, as it was in Srebrenica, is a partial destruction in terms of numbers and targeted population. For the sake of civility this difference should be acknowledged.*"

Marian's above words, in fact, verify his lack of knowledge on the differences between the definitions of "crime against humanity" and "genocide", clearly laid down by the Rome Statute. The elements of these crimes are enumerated below.²⁵

Marian: "Armenians are Growing Impatient"

Marian maintains that the Armenians, including himself, are growing impatient. 2015 is their deadline for the recognition of the genocide and further delay is

24 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien," Liane Levi, 2009, p.115.

25 The elements of the Crimes Against Humanity as laid down by the Article 7 of the Rome Statute(*creatig the International Penal Tribunal*): Crimes against humanity by : murder, extermination,enslavement,deportation or forcible transfer of population,imprisonment or other severe dceprivation of physical liberty,torture,rape,sexual slavery, enforced prostitution,forced pregnancy,enforced sterilization, sexual violence,persecution, enforced disappearance of persons, apartheid or other inhumane acts.

The elements of genocide as laid down by the Article 6 oof the Rome Statute :Genocide by : killing,causing serious bodilyiy or mental harm,deliberatly inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction,imposing mesaures intended to prevent bïrths, forcibly transferring children.

unthinkable. Responding to this, Insel says "*I sympathize with your impatience.*"²⁶

At the following stage of the dialogue, Marian underlines that he does not approve when "*Armenians make advantage of their moral upper hand in their relations with Turks and adopts an accusing tone.*" Similarly, he does not agree with attacking the people who "do not use the term genocide" or the historians such as Fuat Dündar who "uses the term genocide in a functional way."²⁷ Because the denial of genocide or diminishing its extent doesn't commensurate with the very act of it; the Turks who deny the genocide could not be treated as the committers of this crime.²⁸

Expectations from Turkey

Insel says that the Turks must perform a "*memory exercise*" and adds that "*they first must not be confronted with historical events long past forgotten and denied*". He says that "*the acknowledging of the history will take some time and this exercise must start from the bottom (not the top). If not, the Turkish State may create a sudden and unexpected reversal by stating that the truth known until now has changed and the new truth now is different...*"

Marian Advocates that Europeans May Put Pressure on Turkey to Recognize the Armenian genocide

According to Marian, Armenians have waited for 90 years. He believes that those who hold the key to the doors of Europe support the Armenian cause and could put pressure on Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide, as a precondition for their entry to the European Union. But if the balance of power giving Europe a negotiating advantage changes, the Armenians may never get what they want.

Marian argues that "*the first AKP government played an important role in breaking the ice*" between Turks and Armenians. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in a speech made in Düzce on May 23, 2009 said, "*for years people with different ethnical identities have been expelled from the country. This has not been done with good intentions. It has been done in a fascist way.*" This was another step forward. On the other hand, the Turkish President Abdullah Gül, has not agreed with American President Barack Obama's approach in April 2009. But according to Marian, "*Gül also is likely to abandon the official policy of denial. "On this*

26 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien," Liane Levi, 2009, p.114.

27 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien," Liane Levi, 2009, p.18.

account, although Turks may not accept the Armenian viewpoint, Armenians could still expect from Turkey to give up its official discourse of denial. In doing that, Turkey could, for instance, stop teaching its diplomats on the denial of the genocide; rewrite its schoolbooks, and withdraw its support from the institutions openly praising the Young Turks, as well as from the nationalist groups abroad.”

Conveying his expectations, Marian says, “*The Tribunal aspect, what Armenians have been waiting for since the 1960s, is now a dream only. The International Criminal Court has decided not to try the incidents prior to its establishment.²⁹ What is more, the States cannot be put to trial. Only the officials can. It is very disappointing that there will be no court like the Nurnberg Court for the Armenians. In 1915, the Allied Powers warned the Committee of Union and Progress that they would be held responsible if they continued killing the Armenians. Such a warning was, then, a novelty in international law. Afterwards, the Allied Powers did not pursue the idea of establishing a court for the crimes committed against Armenians; instead, they took over the Ottoman territories on the grounds that Turks were not fit to govern non-Turkish peoples.*”³⁰

What Marian and like-minds need to be reminded is that the Ottoman officials exiled to Malta were exonerated and released for lack of evidence without trial. The non-mention of this fact should be seen as another manifestation of selective reading and forgetfulness of the inconvenient truth.

According to Marian, “*There is a rise of consciousness among the Armenians about the importance of moral satisfaction as opposed to claims for territory. Of course, some minority groups insist on their claims for territory. How can this moral satisfaction be attained other than through the recognition of the genocide? How can the return of the Armenians to their old land be possible without the creation of an Armenian homeland? Maybe, the Turkish government, as a symbolic gesture, could give half of Mount Ararat to Armenians or could give the historical capital Ani. From the practical aspect, the Armenian ships could be allowed to disembark at the Trabzon port. Again, there could be gestures made by the residents of Van to the Armenians of Van origin and by the residents of Muş to the Armenians of Muş origin. Those gestures do not have to be granting citizenship; they could very well be about acknowledging the Armenian existence.*” “*Naturally, my suggestions could encounter some objections in Erzurum where my family is from. I still very much want to go to Erzurum, but I am scared*” (pp. 136-137). “*Nonetheless, for the*

28 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), “Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian,” Liane Levi, 2009, p. 132.

29 There is not such a decision taken by the International Court of Justice. A certain Mr. de Zayas, expert paid by the Armenian diaspora published a pamphlet defending the opposite view

30 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), “Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian,” Liane Levi, 2009, p. 77-78.

sake of total freedom of expression, the Turkish government should put an end to the propaganda war."³¹ Insel agrees with Marian and says that all those suggestions, however, depend on strong public demand.

Reading these statements on Armenian demands is particularly interesting in terms of understanding how far Marian and like-minds have fallen out of the truth or would like to be. They believe that some major powers such as the US, France, and the European Parliament could still exert pressure on Turkey in the way that had been done before and after the First World War. When these people are told that such pressures bear consequences opposite to what they desire, they remain surprised and even disbelieving. They hold on to their expectations fuelled by the promises and guarantees given to them by some American and European politicians. Nevertheless, it is a clear concern that the disappointment, which will be caused by the impossibility with regard the fulfillment of these expectations, could lead to another "Armenian trauma".

The Number of Armenians

In terms of confronting history, Insel speaks about the working papers by some non-governmental organizations. Among them, there is a history-book project assigned to Ahmet Kuyuş by TUSIAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association). In the draft book, the attacks carried on the Ottoman citizens by the Armenians are recounted as events that took place later in 1916, rather than events that preceded the 1915 incidents. Also, the number of the Armenian casualties is cited as 600.000. Insel, though regretting that the TUSIAD book has not been incorporated into the curriculum, rejoices that it has nonetheless inspired some school teachers. In 1923, as he goes, there were 300.000 Armenians residing in Anatolia and it is imperative that the Turkish people confront those Armenians' ordeal. More generally, Turks need to free themselves from the paranoia nursed by Kemalism and count the skeletons in their own closets. Otherwise, they will have more "other and newly forgotten." In his view, Turkey owes recognition to Armenians. As he concludes, Insel submits that one of the reasons of this great tragedy was the notion of "internal enemy" and this should not persist. Today, Insel says, the same internal enemy discourse has been renewed for the Kurds.³²

Marian, on the other hand, reminds that the number of the Armenian casualties pronounced by Taner Akçam is 800.000, but the number that they are used to hear

31 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, p. 114.

32 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, p. 136.

is 1.500.000. Among the Armenian losses, there were those who had died during the deportation, of exhaustion, hunger and cold. The Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire was believed to be 1.900.000; they had 3000 churches and 2000 schools. However, this battle of numbers should not, Marian says, prevent the rewriting of schoolbooks.

Slaughter Committed Upon the Ottoman Turks

İnsel holds that not only the Armenians but “*fate of the Muslims who were exiled from the Caucasus and Balkans and slaughtered should also be taken into account. The official Turkish viewpoint, in the 1970s and 80s put particular emphasis on the ASALA terror and the treason of the Armenians in collaboration with France and Russia during the First World War and thus, shuffled the chronology of events.*”³³ For instance, according to İnsel, the Armenians who had fled to Russia, together with the Russian troops, did in fact slaughter the Muslims, after their return to Ottoman territories subsequent to the 1915 incidents.

Additionally, “*During their uprising, prior to 24 April 1915, which is accepted as the symbolic date for the Armenian intellectuals exile from Istanbul, the Armenians of Van had killed Muslim civilians. Can these killings, however, justify the deportation of hundred thousands of Armenians from Mid-Anatolia and Marmara? This is a question that has not been asked until recently.*”³⁴

Marian’s response to this comment is equally noteworthy; “*Be careful! Taner Akçam argues that Van uprising, which was especially highlighted in the Young-Turk propaganda took place subsequent to the Armenian killings in the region. From the outbreak of war to April 1915, 55.000 Armenians had been killed.*”

Acts by Armenian Terror Organizations

On the Armenian terror acts, Marian says; “*The first attacks of ASALA put the Armenian community in between the dilemma of events’ positive reflection on the media and the Armenians’ association with terror*”.

When a Dashnak group launched the infamous “*Operation Van*” “*against the Turkish Embassy in 1981, minimum violence was resorted to as only one guard was killed in the hostage-taking incident.*” Marian tells that he participated in the manifestations in front of the Turkish Embassy and “*yes, the Armenians and Turks*

33 Ahmet İnsel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), “Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien,” Liane Levi, 2009, p. 80 and 135.

34 Ahmet İnsel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), “Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien,” Liane Levi, 2009, p.81.

clashed, but this incident was not essentially different from the Armenian attack against the Ottoman Bank on 26 August 1896. There had not been any casualties back then either."³⁵ Insel says at this point that he was not at the Turkish Embassy during the attack of 1981, because he was not on good terms with the embassy staff.

In his reply to a question, Marian stresses that he is not a supporter of ASALA when he says *"yes, to the pleasure of awakening, but that is it."* Referring to his article published in the French literary magazine *Esprit* in 1984, he says his views on ASALA were basically as such; *"No to terror, but the plainness of the terrorist acts and the support of terror have resulted in a democratic participation of some sort and unfortunately these terrorist acts have been received well by the Armenians in Diaspora."* According to Marian, *"The assassination of the Turkish officials served as a megaphone that awakened the Armenians' memory."*³⁶

In his subsequent writings, Marian adopts a stance for the recognition of the genocide, against terrorism. Within this framework, the association, which he was a member of, worked in close cooperation with the Belgian MEP Vandemeulebroucke for the European Parliament's decision in 1987 recognizing the Armenian genocide. Now, Turkey's recognition of the Armenian genocide is a precondition for Turkey's EU membership. As Michel Marian admits its close relation and collaboration with the Euro-Armenian Association, it is difficult to imagine that he ignores the verdict of the European Court of Justice, which rejected the precondition plea of the Armenian associations.³⁷

Ahmet Insel contributes by saying that *"The Armenian terror has intensified Turkey's active policy of denial. Turkey is a country in which the state exerts violence and at the same time expects its peoples' approval of this violence."*³⁸

35 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009., p.36.

36 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, p. 83.

37 Decision of the Court of the European Communities.:

Subject Turkey's status as a candidate for accession to the European Union

"The (Armenian) applicants applied for ... the suspension of the procedure for examining the Republic of Turkey's candidature for accession to the European Union... the requested that the resumption of the accession procedure be made conditionnal on prior acknowledgment by that State of the Armenian genocide (page 2)"

Decision of the court : "the entire action of the applicant must be dismissed" "the recognition of Turkey's status as a candidate for accession to the European Union is the result of an act of the European Council.... The European Parliament decision is a document containing declarations of a purely political nature which may be amended by the Parliament at any time. It cannot therefore have binding legal consequences ...

The claims for suspension of the accession negotiations and compensation are manifestly unfounded.... The Court of first instance orders 1) the action is dismissed). The applicant shall bear the costs.

Luxembourg 17 December 2003

The appeal of the Euro-Armenian Association has also been rejected on 29.October 2004

38 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménian," Liane Levi, 2009, p. 82.

Turkey's EU Bid and Genocide

Marian believes that the EU will insist on the recognition of the genocide as a precondition to Turkey's membership.³⁹ The Republic of Armenia also sees Turkey's membership as a way to their rapprochement with Europe. Be this as it may, the Armenian Diaspora objects to Turkey's membership altogether because of the risk that Turkey's denial may somehow gain official recognition.⁴⁰ With the condition of recognizing the genocide, however, the majority of Armenians are ready to back up Turkey's membership and even to defend its bid. On the other hand, Insel seems to keep his distance to Turkey's membership process. He argues that Turkey may not need the EU in the future, but Turkey's relations with Armenia, which have been held hostage by the Armenian-Azeri conflict, should still be normalized.

Archives

When Marian suggests that research in the archives should be encouraged on the grounds that no living witnesses have survived to this day, Insel responds that the members of the Union and Progress Committee must have destroyed their personal archives. On the issue of Armenian property, the General Staff's archives alongside the Dashnak archives could be helpful. Also, he reminds that the Turkish National Committee banned the publication of the cadastral records translated from Ottoman Turkish in 2005, because the records could have been used to legitimize the Armenian demands of property⁴¹ and underpin the arguments for the recognition of the genocide.

What Has Been "Learned" from the Dialogue?

The last part of the book is entitled "What We Have Learned" Among the issues that the two partners in dialogue seem to agree upon are as follows:⁴²

39 Please read the previous footnote and decide if Mr. Marian's stand on this issue is due to ignorance, selective reading or wishful thinking

40 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien," Liane Levi, 2009, p. 139.

41 With regard the Armenian property demands (if any) Professor Ahmet Insel seems to ignore the settlements reached by the Lausanne Treaty, as well as the compensation paid by the Turkish Republic to the United States pursuant to the Agreement of December 24, 1923 (See on this subject : American -Turkish Claims settlement. Opinion and report prepared by Fred Nielsen in accordance with the Act of March 22, 1935. 49.Stat.67. United States Government printing Office, Washington, 1937

42 Ahmet Insel, Michel Marian, Ariane Bonzou (Interviewer), "Dialogue Sur Le Tabou Arménien," Liane Levi, 2009, p. 148.

- *The 1915 incidents are a chain of atrocities, uprisings and political conflicts.*
- *The political group governing the Ottoman State had the will to destroy the Ottoman Armenians*
- *The Republic of Turkey is obliged to recognize its responsibility on this question.*
- *Denial damages democracy. What the speakers haven't agreed upon is not the events themselves. The use of the words such as the Shoah is still problematic and the dialogue partners shall return to that topic.*
- *Different information and viewpoints on some of the events and explanations have been taken notice of.*
- *The continuation of such dialogue is useful. Nevertheless, the dialogue process cannot go on forever. The trap of a prolonged dialogue could intensify the disappointment even further in the future. Dialogue could flatten out the bumps on the road and help the politicians and non-governmental organizations that are in the position of coming up with the right gestures and words.*

The apology letter dating December 2008 signed by Turkish intellectuals and the thank you letter written in return by 60 people of Armenian origin alongside a chronology and bibliography are annexed to the book.

Conclusion

This book in itself is a remarkable example of how the universal standards of academic principles and values are undermined by two established professors. It is also a noteworthy example of lack of knowledge in terms of international law, denial of existing court decisions and all the relevant literature on the subject. And it does not require further comments as the book speaks for itself.

“Turkey bashing” is apparently the favorite pastime and self-stimulation of so-called intellectuals.

